

Application # 10/608,175
Amendment dated March 17, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated March 4, 2004

PATENT
P-3488D1

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-13 (Cancelled)

Claim 14. (Currently Amended) A method for achieving accurate machine reading of information on a tube, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a tube having a closed bottom, an open top and a cylindrical side wall extending therebetween, said side wall being concentric about a longitudinal axis, said tube having an alignment key non-concentrically disposed relative to said longitudinal axis;

prior to collecting the sample in the tube, providing an array of information on said cylindrical side wall by use of a first apparatus such that said array of information is substantially parallel to said longitudinal axis and such that said array of information is at a specified angular position relative to said alignment key;

collecting a the sample of a biological fluid in said tube; and

subsequent to collecting the sample, positioning said tube in a laboratory apparatus distinct from said first apparatus such that said alignment key engages an alignment structure on said laboratory apparatus, thereby allowing said laboratory apparatus to ~~and reading read~~ said information on said tube from a specified angular position relative to said alignment key.

Claim 15. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein said alignment key is a substantially planar fin lying in a plane passing through said longitudinal axis, said method comprising the step of engaging said fin in a slot formed in said laboratory apparatus.

Claim 16. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein said alignment key is a substantially planar notch extending into said ~~evacuated blood collection~~ tube, said laboratory

Application # 10/608,175
Amendment dated March 17, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated March 4, 2004

PATENT
P-3488D1

apparatus comprising a planar fin, said method comprising the step of engaging said notch over said fin.

Claim 17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein said alignment key comprises a planar surface aligned at an acute angle to said longitudinal axis, said method comprising the step of positioning said planar surface of said ~~evacuated blood collection~~ tube against said a planar surface on said laboratory apparatus.

Claim 18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 14, wherein said array of information comprises a magnetic stripe, said step of reading said information comprising passing said ~~evacuated blood collection~~ tube in proximity to a magnetic reader for reading said information.

Claim 19. (Original) The method of Claim 14, wherein said array of information comprises a bar code, said step of reading said information comprising optically scanning said code.

Claim 20. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein said bar code is a linear bar code or a two dimensional dot matrix maxicode.